

on our side to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HASTERT] to close. It is often said that it takes a lot to make something happen around here. This is a gentleman who has given a lot to make something happen around here, and I am proud to yield him the closing time.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time to talk a few minutes about this bill.

This bill gives people availability of insurance and affordability of insurance. These were the guide words, the words we talked about to make this happen.

That means that a mother who wants to change jobs and has a child that is asthmatic can take that next job. It means a father who wants to move up and do a better job for his family and get a better area or level of his occupation can move to the competitor in the next job over and know his wife with the heart condition can get that care when he changes jobs.

It also means that families have choice; that if they choose to ask a doctor what is the price of this care or if they ask their health care giver what is the cost, that they can get a cost and they can make a decision on where they go because of medical savings accounts.

It also tells a barber in Elgin, IL who wants to have a deductibility that is fair with other companies he can do that. He can deduct his cost of health care up to 80 percent off his income tax.

It is a bill of fairness, it is a bill of availability, and I just want to thank some folks before I leave this podium. Certainly this would not have been done without a fine staff: Ed Cutler, Howard Cohen, Chip Kahn, Phil Mosley, Bitzie Beavin, Russ Mueller, and the Senate staff that worked with us.

And also the chairmen who gave freely of their time and their work to make this happen: Chairman ARCHER, Chairman BLILEY, Chairman HYDE, and Chairman GOODLING, and the subcommittee chairs, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. FAWELL, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. MCCOLLUM.

But most of all I would like to thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] who spent unending hours listening to meetings, so when this bill came together it came together in the right way and it came together in the Committee on Rules.

I thank all of them. This is a good day, and I look forward to passage of this bill.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed with amendments, in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3675. An act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendments to the bill (H.R. 3675) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. HATFIELD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. BOND, Mr. GORTON, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BYRD, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mr. REID, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the Committee on Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3603) "An Act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes."

□ 1830

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3103, HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1996

Mr. ARCHER. Pursuant to House Resolution 502, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 3103) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve portability and continuity of health insurance coverage in the group and individual markets, to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in health insurance and health care delivery, to promote the use of medical savings accounts, to improve access to long-term care services and coverage, to simplify the administration of health insurance, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). Pursuant to House Resolution 502, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of July 31, 1996, at page H9473).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER] and the gentleman from California [Mr. STARK] will each control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Member

may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on the conference report on H.R. 3103.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this is truly a great day and a great week. As significant as all our actions may be for this historic new Congress, the action we take today is even greater for someone else. That someone else may be the victim of breast cancer, locked in a job that she cannot change because she fears losing her health insurance. It may be a victim of diabetes. It may be someone who has had a heart attack, a stroke, or anyone who has ever been seriously ill.

It also, Mr. Speaker, may be my new little baby grandchild, who, born prematurely this year, came into the world weighing just 2 pounds. To me, this little boy is a beautiful child who, thanks to the wonder of modern medicine, can now have a full life. But to others, my grandchild is still a pre-existing condition. When he gets older, he too may not be able to change jobs or even get insurance in the first place.

But I am happy to say that this bill changes all that. This bill lets people change jobs without losing their health insurance, even if they have a preexisting condition.

What a major breakthrough for my grandson, Archer Samuel Hadley, and for millions of Americans who now know this Congress has heard their pleas and answered their prayers. This is the bill that does that, and much, much more. It powerfully fights fraud and abuse by creating new criminal penalties and by increasing funding for prosecution and investigation.

It creates strong and workable medical savings accounts so people can choose their own doctors and control their own health care destiny, seeking the best value in the marketplace, without relying on third parties to pay the bill. It creates new tax deductions that help make health care more available and affordable for millions of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, this is the health bill that the American people have wanted for years, and Mr. Speaker, we did it without a government takeover of the health care delivery system of this country.

We promised to make these changes, and I am proud that we have done it, working together in a bipartisan way, doing the job the American people expect of this Congress.

It has been a great week for this Republican Congress, and a great week for all of us. It has been a great 2 years of accomplishment for our efforts to reform Congress and change America. This Congress will go down in history as the did-something Congress. More importantly, it has been a great week for the American people.